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J. D. English



SNAFFLES' DOG.*

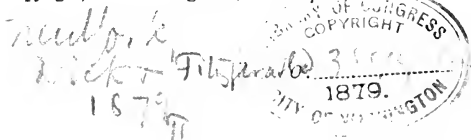
THOMAS DUNN ENGLISH.

Remarkable dogs? Yes. Silas Snaffles had a dog. I do not state that as a remarkable fact, because many other people have had dogs. The dog was not of any peculiar breed. He was not a Scotch deer-hound, nor a Thibet mastiff, nor a Siberian bloodhound, nor a Mount St. Bernard, nor a Newfoundland, nor a black-and-tan terrier, nor a King Charles spaniel; nor was he—and I insist on that particularly, for the credit of the animal—a Spitz dog. He was nothing of the kind, thank you. He was a yellow cur, with long hair, who had probably been kicked out by a former master, had come to the premises of Snaffles in search of a stray bone, and having been well-treated had remained there. It was not because of his race, color or previous condition of servitude that I mention him, but since, as he is the hero of the story, it is positively necessary to bring him before you, or the story could not be told.

So much for the dog. And now for the master.

Silas Snaffles was a very obliging man, and never liked to refuse anybody anything. If you were to ask him to accept the loan of ten dollars, or to take a drink, or to go to the theatre at your expense, Silas would say "Yes" with a promptitude and decision that showed he was ready and willing to oblige you. So, one day, when a friend said to him, "Snaffles, that dog's tail is too long," Snaffles replied at once, "Yes, I think it is; I've neglected my duty in that respect, I'll cut it off right away." Then he inveigled the dog to the wood-pile, and by proper manipulation got him to lay his tail on a block, holding him with the left hand, while he chopped his tail off with a hatchet in his right. The swish of the blow alarmed the brute, who twisted his body; but the hatchet came down all the same, and cut off the tail diagonally, besides inflicting a wound

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in the vicinity. The dog escaped, and, after failing to assume a semicircular shape, in order to lick the wound, ran into the house. There he dropped blood on the carpet, whereupon Mrs. Snaffles coaxed him to leave with the broom-handle, and the animal ran to the stable. He did not come back to the house for two days, and then only because hunger forced him. But he avoided his master. Such is the ingratitude of the canine heart.

The wound healed up in due time, and the dog made up with Snaffles. He not only wagged his tail when he met his master, but not having as much tail to wag as before, wriggled the parts adjacent by way of emphasis and good measure. That dog began to think his troubles were over. But that was an error of judgment. They had only begun.

Another friend of Snaffles' met him. "Why don't you cut that dog's ears off?" he asked. "He'll get into a fight with some other dog presently, and have his ears torn to ribbons, and be whipped into the bargain." "That's so," replied Snaffles, "I never thought of that before. Thank you, I'll crop him immediately." He tied up that dog, head and heels, so that he couldn't stir, and with a pair of shears brought each ear to a fine point. The dog indulged in music at the time, and developed the upper part of his register surprisingly. When he was released he ran at once into the woods, and did not come back for a week; and then he was the most gaunt and unkempt dog possible. He moved around in a sneaking way, and cast unkind looks upon his kind master, unconscious of the fact that all had been done for his personal adornment and positive good.

Well, those wounds healed up too, and after awhile the dog, with all the thoughtlessness of his race, forgot all about it. Possibly he believed there was no farther trouble in store for him. There his judgment was at fault again.

A third friend met Snaffles' with his dog at his heels. "Snaffles, my boy," said the friend, "that wouldn't be

such a bad dog but for his color." "But I can't help that, I assure you," said Snaffles. "Oh, yes, you can," rejoined the other; "you can send him to the dye-house under the hill, and have him dyed." "Bless me!" ejaculated Snaffles, "so I can. That is an obvious solution of the difficulty. I shall send him right away." So Snaffles sent the dog and a boy down the hill, with a note to the dyer. By and by, the boy returned with the dyer's compliments, and he would like to know what color the dog was to receive. "I don't know," said Snaffles. "Tell Mr. Tint to dye him with any color he has on hand." In about two hours more the dyer's man brought up a bill for five dollars. Snaffles opened his eyes at this; but the man explained that the dog could not be put into the boiling copper, or he would be dead as well as dyed; that the stuff had to be cooled; that it took more of the costly mordant to fix the color. Snaffles discharged the bill, and then the man informed him that the dog would be up as soon as he was dry, that the color was setting beautifully, and was sure to wash.

After dinner, while Snaffles was working away at the flowers in his front yard, his wife called out from the second-story window, front, "Silas, just *look* at that queer dog!" Silas looked, and in the next moment the dog dashed in. The animal looked like an enormous live coal. He seemed to light up everything. He was dyed a light orange-scarlet. He had come up the hill scattering sparks like a rocket. Old Cy had met him, and the appearance half sobered him. He became convinced that he had the delirium tremens, and went off to his namesake, Cy Bosch, and signed the pledge, making it more binding by the sign of the cross, and the cabalistic words, "his mark," and kept it for nearly twenty-four hours. Mrs. Snaffles just sat down and cried, and then inveigled the dog into the back kitchen, and plunged him in a bath of soap-suds, and lathered him and drenched him and soaked him; but all this only brought out the color with additional brilliancy,

until it lit the place with its lurid glow. Then she gave it up. "Silas," said the partner of his bosom, "you must get him dyed black. That color is too ridiculous." Silas acceded. "Just as you remark," he said. "Black is a good color." And he started off with the dog to the dye-house. On his way there every passer felt disposed to warm his fingers at the dog, and all the dogs met pitched into Snaffles' dog, and Snaffles was treated to a half dozen dog-fights that were not interfered with by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

But the dyer wouldn't be in black for a week. For seven days Snaffles had to stop and explain the matter to curious people, and the dog was kept locked up in the stable, and the place was thronged by neighbors who were anxious to see the dog. But at last the dyer dyed the dog black. The bright color underneath was not quite subdued, and he had an orange-tawny purple hue. The dyer said he could give him a second dip next week, and complete the color.

Mrs. Snaffles was struck with the new shade, and desired to get a silk of the same tint, if possible. So she cut off some of the fringe from the stump of the dog's tail and wrapped it in tissue paper, and went to Stewart's and Lord & Taylor's in an endeavor to match it. The salesman asked her what kind of goat the hair came from, and Mrs. Snaffles, who had been reading in the Cyclopaedia, under the letter D, said it was *canis vulgaris*, and the salesman said he had heard that a few of the kind had been brought here recently. But she did not succeed in getting that particular shade in any kind of dress-goods.

In a week the dog had the finishing touches put on, and looked like a first-class funeral. He grew vain of his personal appearance, and put on so many airs about it, that he was taken in hand, or more correctly speaking, in mouth, by several of the big dogs in the vicinity, who shook all the conceit out of him.

Snaffles and the dog had a rest for some time. But in

about a month the dog's hair grew so as to show the new yellow part of the capillary adornment, and the appearance of the dog was offensive to good taste.

A fourth friend met Snaffles and the dog in their walk. "Snaffles," he said, "don't you think that dog looks rather absurd?" Snaffles admitted the absurdity, and the friend resumed his remarks: "Why don't you get him shaved?" "Shaved! how?" "Get one of those fellows that clip horses, you know, to do it." "That's a good suggestion," replied Snaffles. "It shall be done with dispatch." So the dog was sent off to the horse-clipper's, and duly returned divested of his capillary covering, in company with a bill for five dollars. Snaffles demurred; but the clipper assured him that the dog had given extra trouble, that it took two men to hold him, and that he wouldn't take a second job of the kind at any price. Snaffles then paid up like a man. As for the dog, who had not been consulted during these varied and rather disagreeable processes, he seemed to enjoy the last. The weather was warm, and the removal of the heavy hair rendered him particularly light and airy. The dog was pleased, Snaffles was pleased, and the two went out for a stroll.

A fifth friend met the two—it was another each time, and looked very much like part of a conspiracy. "Snaffles, my boy," said he, "that is a Chinese dog, I see. Are they not rather tender for this climate?" "Why, yes; but you see that isn't a Chinese dog—it is mine." "Of course, I know it is yours; but the variety—the kind, I mean." "I tell you it is my dog—he's been shaved." "Shaved! Good gracious! Who was his barber? Shaved! That is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard of. It seems to me you don't keep your dogs long. You used to have a yellow dog; then you got a red one; then a purple; then a black; then a mottled fellow; and now one without any hair. For extent and variety you exceed all dog-fanciers." Snaffles was too disgusted to make any answer to this, and walked

on. His good-nature was oozing out. It left his head first, and made him snappish. Then it abandoned his arms, and his fists began to double up. Then it got down lower and lower, and finally escaped through his toes. Just as they came to where the bridge crossed the creek, he raised his right foot and kicked the dog. All the malice, anger and general cussedness so long pent in by good-nature and an obliging disposition vented themselves at once, and with a terrific concentration of vigor. It took the dog right under the jaw. It broke his neck, and at the same time lifted his body like a petard. The dog arose in air, described a parabola with mathematical precision—there was a splash, a disappearance from sight, a few bubbles arose in pearly mystery to the surface, a succession of rippling rings widened on the water, and then there was a solemn stillness. Snaffles leaned on the railing of the bridge, and looked over.

Presently the first friend came along.

“Hallo, Snaffles !” he said. “Where is your dog ?”

The reply of Snaffles was given with great intensity. It was brief and pointed. It consisted of the word—“Dead !” and two others in the imperative mood, consigning his friend to a place whose warmth it is impossible to gauge by any known thermometer.

But Snaffles’ dog was at peace. He had gone to the oozy bottom of the water, to be troubled no more.

GO VAY, BECKY MILLER, GO VAY !

ANON.

I don’t lofe you now von schmall little bit,
My dream vas blayed oud, so you can git up and git ;
Mit your false-headed vays I can’t get along mit—

Go vay, Becky Miller, go vay !

Vas all der young vomans so false-head like you,
Mit a face nice and bright, and a heart black and plue,



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